JAMES JOYCE

Pomes Penyeach

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by James Joyce

Tilly

He travels after a winter sun,
Urging the cattle along a cold red road,
Calling to them, a voice they know,
He drives his beasts above Cabra.

The voice tells them home is warm.
They moo and make brute music with their hoofs.
He drives them with a flowering branch before him,
Smoke pluming their foreheads.

Boor, bond of the herd,
Tonight stretch full by the fire!
I bleed by the black stream
For my torn bough!

Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba

I heard their young hearts crying
Loveward above the glancing oar
And heard the prairie grasses sighing:
No more, return no more!

O hearts, O sighing grasses,
Vainly your loveblown bannerets mourn!
No more will the wild wind that passes
Return, no more return.

A Flower Given to My Daughter

Frail the white rose and frail are
Her hands that gave
Whose soul is sere and paler
Than time's wan wave.

Rosefrail and fair-- yet frailest
A wonder wild
In gentle eyes thou veilest,
My blueveined child.

She Weeps over Rahoon

Rain on Rahoon falls softly, softly falling,
Where my dark lover lies.
Sad is his voice that calls me, sadly calling,
At grey moonrise.

Love, hear thou
How soft, how sad his voice is ever calling,
Ever unanswered and the dark rain falling,
Then as now.

Dark too our hearts, O love, shall lie and cold
As his sad heart has lain
Under the moongrey nettles, the black mould
And muttering rain.

Tutto è sciolto

A birdless heaven, seadusk, one lone star
Piercing the west,
As thou, fond heart, love's time, so faint, so far,
Rememberest.

The clear young eyes' soft look, the candid brow,
The fragrant hair,
Falling as through the silence falleth now
Dusk of the air.

Why then, remembering those shy
Sweet lures, repine
When the dear love she yielded with a sigh
Was all but thine?

On the Beach at Fontana

Wind whines and whines the shingle,
The crazy pierstakes groan;
A senile sea numbers each single
Slimesilvered stone.

From whining wind and colder
Grey sea I wrap him warm
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending
Darkness of fear above
And in my heart how deep unending
Ache of love!

Simples

O bella bionda,
Sei come l'onda!

Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild
The moon a web of silence weaves
In the still garden where a child
Gathers the simple salad leaves.

A moondew stars her hanging hair
And moonlight kisses her young brow
And, gathering, she sings an air:
Fair as the wave is, fair, art thou!

Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear
To shield me from her childish croon
And mine a shielded heart for her
Who gathers simples of the moon.

Flood

Goldbrown upon the sated flood
The rockvine clusters lift and sway.
Vast wings above the lambent waters brood
Of sullen day.

A waste of waters ruthlessly
Sways and uplifts its weedy mane
Where brooding day stares down upon the sea
In dull disdain.

Uplift and sway, O golden vine,
Your clustered fruits to love's full flood,
Lambent and vast and ruthless as is thine
Incertitude!

Nightpiece

Gaunt in gloom
The pale stars their torches
Enshrouded wave.
Ghostfires from heaven's far verges faint illume
Arches on soaring arches,
Night's sindark nave.

Seraphim
The lost hosts awaken
To service till
In moonless gloom each lapses, muted, dim
Raised when she has and shaken
Her thurible.

And long and loud
To night's nave upsoaring
A starknell tolls
As the bleak incense surges, cloud on cloud,
Voidward from the adoring
Waste of souls.

Alone

The noon's greygolden meshes make
All night a veil,
The shorelamps in the sleeping lake
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper to the night
A name-- her name-
And all my soul is a delight,
A swoon of shame.

A Memory of the Players in a Mirror at Midnight

They mouth love's language. Gnash
The thirteen teeth
Your lean jaws grin with. Lash
Your itch and quailing, nude greed of the flesh.
Love's breath in you is stale, worded or sung,
As sour as cat's breath,
Harsh of tongue.

This grey that stares
Lies not, stark skin and bone.
Leave greasy lips their kissing. None
Will choose her what you see to mouth upon.
Dire hunger holds his hour.
Pluck forth your heart, saltblood, a fruit of tears.
Pluck and devour!

Bahnhofstrasse

The eyes that mock me sign the way
Whereto I pass at eve of day.

Grey way whose violet signals are
The trysting and the twining star.

Ah star of evil! star of pain!
Highhearted youth comes not again

Nor old heart's wisdom yet to know
The signs that mock me as I go.

A Prayer

Again!
Come, give, yield all your strength to me!
From far a low word breathes on the breaking brain
Its cruel calm, submission's misery,
Gentling her awe as to a soul predestined.
Cease, silent love! My doom!

Blind me with your dark nearness, O have mercy, beloved enemy of my will!
I dare not withstand the cold touch that I dread.
Draw from me still
My slow life! Bend deeper on me, threatening head,
Proud by my downfall, remembering, pitying
Him who is, him who was!

Again!
Together, folded by the night, they lay on earth. I hear
From far her low word breathe on my breaking brain.
Come! I yield. Bend deeper upon me! I am here.
Subduer, do not leave me! Only joy, only anguish,
Take me, save me, soothe me, O spare me!

Notes

These poems were offered to Ezra Pound in 1926, who said "They belong in the Bible or in the family album with the portraits." In March 1927, though, Archibald MacLeish responded very favorably so Joyce went ahead with publication.

First published 6 (or 7) July 1927 by Shakespeare Co, with a pale-green cover (the color of Joyce's favorite 'Caville' apples), selling for a shilling (twelvepence) or twelve francs, according to Ellmann. The lone review was in the 'Daily Herald'.

Jeffares and Kennelly explain: "This book cost a shilling, so that we might have expected from its title a dozen poems, but Joyce followed an Irish custom in adding a 'tilly' (from Irish tuilleadh, an added measure), a thirteenth poem, the first poem in the book being titled 'Tilly'. He probably had in mind the custom of Dublin milkmen and milkwomen of pouring an extra amount of milk into the purchaser's receptacle from the small, usually pint-sized, tilly can that accompanied a larger can or churn."

Tilly (Dublin 1904):

Earlier versions' titles: 'Cabra' (1903, after his mother's death), 'Ruminants' (1919)

Cabra is the Dublin district where Joyce was living at his mother's death (also depicted in Ulysses)

Needleboats (Trieste 1912):

published in the Saturday Review (London), 17 September 1913

San Sabba is near Trieste. 'Return no more' is from Puccini's "La Fanciulla del West" accoring to Ellmann, which the scullers were singing that day.

Flower (Trieste 1913):

Ellmann claims this is about one of Joyce's students, whom he had a crush on, also the subject of *Giacomo Joyce.* Lucia turned six in July 1913.

Rahoon (Trieste 1913):

This is based on Nora's relationship to Michael Bodkin, also used in "The Dead"

Tutto (Trieste 13 July 1914):

The title translates: "All is unloosed"

Fontana (Trieste 1914):

Giorgio turned 9yo in July 1914.

The opening line faintly echoes Stephen's 'drivel' poem in Portrait V:

Simples (Trieste 1914):

The epigraph translates "O fair blonde, Thou art as the wave!"

Lucia turned seven in July 1914.

Wallace Stevens had a similar poem: "Cy Est Pourtraicte, Mme Ste Ursule..." written 1915, published September 1923. (Joyce *may* have seen it and jotted FW note 2.59 in Sept23: "God annoyed by prayer".) The first verse:

> Ursula, in a garden, found
> A bed of radishes.
> She kneeled upon the ground
> And gathered them,
> With flowers around,
> Blue, gold, pink, and green....

Flood (Trieste 1915)

Nightpiece (Trieste, 22 January 1915):

'starknell' should be pronounced with a silent 'k': star-knell not stark-knell.

Joyce used this poem in a very early Finnegans Wake draft. The context seems to suggest that Isolde is shocked by the poet's (Tristan's) heartlessness. (Cf FW note: "T S Eliot ends idea of poetry for ladies") (I've removed most of the commas, based on this earlier version)

Robert Herrick wrote a poem with the same title.

Ellmann associates it with *Giacomo Joyce* on the strength of the phrase 'sindark nave' (otherwise unlikely).

Alone (Zurich 1916):

Players (Zurich 1917):

Joyce's Zurich theatrical company, the English Players, wasn't founded until 1918 (using money given anonymously by Mrs Harold McCormick in February) so this poem predates it.

Bahnhofstrasse (Zurich 1918)

Prayer (Paris 1924):